

The
Bradford Times

home & garden

2016



On behalf of Council for the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, it is my pleasure to bring Spring greetings by way of this information filled Garden Mogozone.

Springtime symbolizes rebirth, rejuvenation, and regrowth and with the arrival of warmer weather we can expect the Town to be filled with vibrant colours and exciting activity.

The downtown core and Town parks will once again be adorned with cheerful plantings to brighten up the Town.

I encourage you to experience the beauty of the Town by walking or cycling on our wonderful trails system.

Be sure to visit our local Farmers Market held every Saturday morning starting in late May, where you will find a bevy of fresh Holland Marsh produce and unique hand crafted products from our talented local artisans.

Enjoy Spring in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury!
Mayor Rob Keffer

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PM POSTMEDIA

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Gardening tips for beginners



Gardening is a rewarding hobby that many enthusiasts credit with helping them to peacefully escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Though gardening can be both relaxing and rewarding, it's not as easy as it may seem, and the more time and effort a person devotes to his or her garden the more likely it is to be successful.

Gardening can be a little daunting for beginners who have little or no experience planting flowers or vegetables. But gardening need not be so intimidating, especially for those beginners who adhere to the following tips aimed at helping novice gardeners start their gardens off on the right foot.

- **Determine what you should plant.** Where you live will go a long way toward determining what you should plant. While you can plant anything you can get your hands on, Agri-Food Canada have determined specific plant hardiness zones that indicate which plants are most likely to thrive in given locations. Maps of these zones

can be found at www.agr.gc.ca. By adhering to the maps, gardeners can significantly increase their chances of growing successful gardens. When in doubt about what to plant, consult a local gardening center or seek advice from a professional landscaper.

- **Think location when beginning your garden.** Beginners with large yards have the luxury of choosing the right location on their properties to start planting. When choosing a spot, consider how much sunlight a location gets on a daily basis and the spot's proximity to a water supply. If planting flowers, try to avoid planting in areas with heavy foot traffic so the flowers are less likely to be stomped. If you're planting flowers to accent walkways, then consider erecting a barrier around the flower bed to safeguard the flowers from foot traffic.

- **Get started before you plant.** Preparing the soil a few weeks before you start planting can help the plants thrive down the road. Add some organic material, such as compost or fertilizer, to the soil roughly three weeks



before planting. This helps the soil retain water and nutrients, which will help your garden thrive.

- **Don't forget to mulch.** Mulch can be as aesthetically appealing as it is effective. Mulch retains soil, helping roots to grow stronger, while deterring bugs and preventing weed growth. And many gardeners find mulch adds visual appeal in their garden, and does so in a very inexpensive way.

- **Clean your tools.** Beginners rarely recognize the importance of cleaning gardening tools before putting them away. At the end of each gardening session, clean your tools thoroughly, as soil left on your garden tools can play host to potentially harmful microbes that might kill your plants.

Gardening can be a labor-intensive yet gratifying hobby. By sticking to a few simple rules, beginners can develop a thriving garden to reward all of that hard work.

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How to approach buying a pool or spa



Many homeowners feel pools or spas are must-have features as they attempt to turn their homes into their own personal oases. The decision to get a pool or a hot tub is not one to take lightly. Significant purchases, pools and/or spas can affect the value of a home and also require various safety modifications. Taking a thoughtful approach when considering adding pools and/or spas to their homes can help homeowners rest easy knowing they made the right decision.

- **Do your research first.** When making any decision, it's best to be well-informed. Read reviews on products and find out the base prices of certain pool models so you'll have a system of comparison. Choose the type and size of pool you want. Other factors, such as the material used in the pool (i.e., concrete, metal, fiberglass, or vinyl) and filtration methods, also can affect the price, so consider each of these factors carefully before making your decision.

- **Determine why you want a pool or spa.** The type of pool or spa you ultimately choose should depend on how you plan to use the pool. If you want a pool mainly for family entertainment, then you may want to add mood lighting or special landscaping features. If you simply want something in which you can cool off, a basic model may be most practical. If your spa is intended for therapeutic purposes, look for ones with multipositional water jets or other specialized features. Don't fall into the trap that a large pool with a deep diving area is best. Young children and many adults do not frequently use the deep end, and you may end up with wasted pool space.

- **Find a good time to buy.** Fall and winter are some of the best times to get deals on pool and spa equipment because it's no longer prime swimming season. However, there are deals to be had come early spring as well. Retailers may deeply discount last year's models to make room for new inventory. You always can negotiate if the price is just a bit beyond your reach. Retailers may be motivated to make sales in the offseason, so try to use that motivation to your advantage.

- **Recognize there will be extra costs.** Some retailers sell pools and spas but do not arrange for installation. Realize that an inground pool will require excavation, and your yard may need to be regraded to allow for rain runoff. Electricians and landscapers are some additional costs to factor in. Make sure you understand the bigger picture and account for the total cost of modifying the yard.

- **Inquire about insurance.** Speak with the pool installer about any liability and compensation insurance they may carry to protect you in the event of an accident during the installation of the pool. Reputable builders should be fully insured.

- **Learn about zoning laws and other ordinances.** Rules regarding pool placement and size will vary depending on local laws. Always consult with the town's municipal office and get the proper permits. Otherwise, you may face fines and be forced to spend more to fix problems that need to be addressed.

Pools can be entertaining additions to a home. When considering the addition of a pool to their properties, homeowners should take their time and make sure it's the right decision for them.



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6 steps to creating fairy gardens for kids



Gardening can be an enjoyable activity for adults and children alike. Gardening encourages creative thinking and can make for an eco-friendly activity as well.

Adding a touch of whimsy to gardening can make it that much more attractive to children. Perhaps that is why fairy gardens have become so popular among youngsters. Fairy gardens can be designed in outdoor gardens or in containers that children can nurse and enjoy indoors. Here are six steps to get your fairy garden up and running.

1. Choose your container or location. Decide where to place the fairy garden. Hollowed-out tree stumps are both contained and outdoors, and kids may feel like the fairies inhabited this neglected area of the yard and made it their own. Otherwise, use containers you already have, such as old pots, hanging baskets, picnic baskets or

cookie tins. Wooden birdhouses with their roofs removed also can make for clever places to house the gardens.

2. Choose a theme. Fairy houses can take on any theme their creators prefer. Themes help children decide what to include in their gardens. For example, a seaside retreat may work well with little redining chairs, sea grasses and succulents. You can then complete the theme by adding some seashells and colored stones.

3. Draw up your design. Before securing anything in the container or digging into your garden bed, sketch out a garden design. This gives you an idea of how the finished product will look. Even before planting, gently place plants and other components in their spots and move them around accordingly until you find the desired look.

4. Include similar-needs plants. Mixing plants that have different requirements can make it challenging to care for the fairy garden, so select plants that require similar levels of sunlight, prefer similar soil conditions and require roughly the same amount of watering. Herbs are a smart choice because they stay small and are easily maintained.

5. Don't forget a fairy dwelling. You will need to add a house for the fairies to inhabit. Small bird houses can work, but you also can consider old teapots, bird-nesting boxes or even homemade houses assembled out of bark and twigs. Use your imagination and the garden will take on a life of its own.

6. Invite the fairies. Children can invite fairies to take up residence (fairies often show up at night and tend to remain unseen), or children can create their own fairies using craft materials.

Fairy gardens are a fun way to introduce children to gardening. Once families get started, they may want to create entire fairy villages.



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Operate garage doors safely



A garage door is an oft-overlooked part of a home. Some are rarely opened, while others are used on a daily basis. Though they might be overlooked, garage doors play a role in thousands of injuries every year.

Roughly 20,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries related to garage doors, says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian hospitals report that roughly 60 percent of all garage door injuries are cut fingers or hands. The majority of injuries happen at a person's own home.

Although children are more susceptible to garage door injuries, these injuries can happen to people of all ages. That is why it is wise for all members of the family to familiarize themselves with how to prevent garage door injuries.

Crushing concerns

Safety experts from many organizations, including CPSC, estimate the average garage door weighs more than 400 pounds. A door of that weight can break bones and crush adults and children alike. There are many reasons a door can fall, including lost tension, improper installation or a

faulty track or springs. A garage door may become faulty if it was hit by an automobile and not mended correctly.

Many different manufacturers have created safety features that can be installed on garage doors to control the speed of descent and also automatically stop a garage door should it be involved in a free fall. There also are features that retract the door should it meet with an obstacle on the ground when the door is closing.

Unsafe ride-along

Some children and teenagers think it is entertaining to ride on the garage door when it is automatically being opened. The kids let go before the door reaches the header of the garage. Unfortunately, many children are not as lucky and can become trapped between the garage door and the small space at the ceiling of the garage. Others may have hands or feet become stuck between the folding panel joints of the door, resulting in breaks or amputations.

Children should be advised never to ride on an opening garage door. Some automatic garage door opener manufacturers have begun developing safety systems that shut down the operation of the door if a sensor measures extra weight on the garage door.

Sharp edges

Tracks on standard garage doors are frequently made of sharp-edged metal and have numerous open holes in the construction that are tempting for little fingers. Cuts have occurred to both children and adults in and around tracks. Look for garage doors that have rounded-out edges on the track and a closed design that does not enable fingers to be trapped between rolling mechanisms and the garage door track.

Open joints in door

Most standard garage doors are made by fitting several panels together to create a solid door. This allows for the bending motion of the door when it is retracted. Gaps between these panels, called joints, can trap fingers or toes, resulting in anything from pinching to amputations. Shoppers may want to consider a door that guards against open joints with protective features that do not allow finger entry between joints.

Other safety precautions

- Do not leave the garage door partially open. When it is reactivated, it first may travel downward before retracting back upward.

- Test the auto-reversing feature of the garage door monthly by placing a roll of paper towels beneath the door. If the door does not reverse upon contact with the towels, have the door repaired or replaced.
- Make sure that no snow or ice is blocking the door during cold weather. In addition, check for other obstructions that could make the door work incorrectly.
- Do not let young children play in the garage unattended. Not only can a garage door be a hazard, but also carbon monoxide poisoning in the garage is another serious concern.
- Regularly clean the working parts of the garage door to ensure safe operation.
- Do not try to fix garage door problems on your own. Serious injuries can ensue when the torque on springs and other mechanisms are adjusted improperly on high-tension parts. Hire a professional to get the job done right.
- Educate children and other family members of all the dangers associated with garage doors so they will know how to use them safely.

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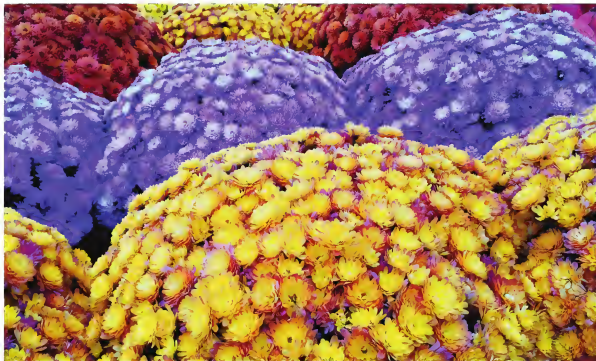
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Mums not exclusive to fall



Chrysanthemums, often referred to as "mums," are among the most popular flowers for autumn plantings and landscape decor. But these hardy, often vividly colored plants are worthy of attention as early as the spring gardening season.

Although mums are most often purchased in September and October and cast aside shortly thereafter, the plant that many people mistake for an annual is actually a perennial - meaning with the proper care it can come back year after year. By planting mums in the spring, gardeners ensure the plants have enough time to develop solid root systems, including their hallmark underground runners that enable them to grow tall and wide and over-winter.

While it's best to plant potted mums that were used in fall decorating after the flowers die and before winter sets in, some container plants can still thrive and come back the following year. When cleaning gardens in the spring, do not trash withered mums that may have been stashed behind the shed. Try planting them and you may be surprised that they thrive and rebloom in the garden this year. Remove the dead branches and dried-up parts of the plant only after new shoots begin to grow.

Gardening experts advise planting mums in sunny

spots with southern exposure. However, be sure to keep the plants away from artificial lighting, such as streetlamps or garden accent lighting, as mums are short-day plants that bloom only when the hours of darkness are greater than the hours of daylight. Mums that get too much light at night may not bloom to their fullest capacity, or they may be "leggy," with longer stems instead of being compact. Pruning or "pinching" mums in June and July will help keep mums compact as well, resulting in more flowers.

Mums desire a rich and moist but well-drained soil. Planted mums will require less water than container plants, but the ground should never become soggy. Well-watered plants will offer more flowers.

Hardy mums work well as edging, in mass groupings to create a shrub-like appearance and even in containers. Thanks to their relative affordability, mums are an inexpensive way to dress up landscapes. Mums are hardy in Agri-Food Canada zones four through seven.

Although fall-flowering mums may not be the first plants to come to gardeners' minds at the onset of spring, planning chrysanthemum landscaping now can help ensure beautiful plants when spring and summer flowers begin to wither.

Make the Most of Mulching

Lawns and gardens can often benefit from the laying of mulch. Mulch serves various purposes in lawns and gardens, and many experienced lawn and garden enthusiasts lay mulch to ensure their properties make it through spring, summer and fall unscathed.

First-time homeowners with little or no landscaping experience may not understand the benefits of mulch, which can be used to strengthen soil and protect properties from the elements.

What is mulch?

Mulch refers to a material spread around or over a plant to enrich and/or insulate its soil. Many homeowners prefer mulch made of wood chips, which is both effective and readily available. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that organic mulches, which include leaves, wood chips, compost or grass clippings, can be used by homeowners who want to develop eco-friendly landscapes.

Why mulch?

Mulching can benefit plants around a property in various ways. Many people lay mulch because the mulch helps soil retain moisture in the summer, when temperatures tend to be at their hottest. This can help plants survive summer heat waves.

Mulch also can be used to suppress weeds. Weeds, which steal moisture plants need to build strong roots and survive summer, need light to grow. When laid correctly, mulch deprives weeds of the light they need to grow. Organic mulches can even provide homes for crickets and a type of beetle that feed on weed seeds.

Mulch also can deter harmful pests depending on the type of mulch homeowners choose. When purchasing mulch, homeowners will have to choose between the aforementioned organic mulch or man-made mulches, which may be made of plastic or rubber. While man-made mulches may repel pests, they also can have adverse effects. Plastic, for example, can heat up in the summer and cause plants to burn. Certain organic mulches can repel insects that can threaten plants. That's because the majority of organic mulches increase the amount of beneficial bacteria in the soil, and they also increase the presence of helpful insects that do not pose a threat to plant life. Those helpful insects help keep harmful insects at bay. Compost is a type of organic mulch that may attract harmful insects. While that does not mean homeowners should shy away from using compost as mulch, they should know that they



may need to employ organic insecticides to combat their unwanted guests.

Mulch is a potentially valuable tool homeowners can use to improve the look and health of their properties.



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How dogs benefit from daily walks



Dog owners with fenced-in backyards may think their furry friends are getting all they need during their nightly exercise sessions in the backyard. While such yards provide safe places for dogs to relax and run around, the American Humane Association (www.americanhumane.org) notes that even dogs who run wild in their backyards each day can benefit from daily walks. The following are a handful of ways dogs benefit from daily walks.

- **Socialization:** The Animal Humane Society (www.animalhumanesociety.org) notes that puppies between three weeks and 20 weeks old are generally accepting of other dogs, and nightly walks can provide the perfect opportunity for puppy owners to acquaint their furry friends with their fellow dogs. Continued exposure after 20 weeks can help further the socialization process for young dogs.

- **Behaviour:** While puppies can learn to socialize on daily walks, older dogs may or may not reap the same rewards. But daily walks can help dog owners instill better behaviour in their dogs. The AHS advises that owners of older dogs use walks as opportunities to teach dogs to behave calmly in public. Bring treats to reward dogs for sitting quietly when encountering other

dogs and new people along the walk.

- **Exercise:** Of course, daily walks provide great exercise for dogs. Dogs who are let out in the backyard each night but are not played with may not be getting the exercise their owners think they are. Dogs left alone in a backyard may briefly run around before plopping down in the grass and enjoying the fresh air. That's not enough exercise for many breeds, and it's certainly insufficient for dogs who may be overweight or obese. Nightly walks can help dogs lose and/or maintain healthy weights, and the AHA notes that such walks also help dogs build strength and endurance.

- **Stimulation:** According to the American Kennel Club (www.akc.org), dogs need both physical and mental stimulation to stay healthy and happy. Walks obviously provide physical stimulation, but they can stimulate dogs mentally as well. Dogs often interrupt walks when their curiosity gets the better of them, stopping to observe or investigate something while on walks, and that's mentally stimulating. Resist the temptation to pull the leash when dogs want to stop to check something out, affording them a little time to do some mental exploration before continuing the walk.

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